Saint Paul Planning Commission
City Hall Conference Center
15 Kellogg Boulevard West

Minutes November 3, 2017

A meeting of the Planning Commission of the City of Saint Paul was held Friday, November 3, 2017, at 8:30 a.m. in the Conference Center of City Hall.


Commissioners Absent: Messrs. Khaled, *Ochs, and Oliver.

*Excused

Also Present: Donna Drummond, Planning Director; Yaya Diatta, Department of Safety and Inspections, Lucy Thompson, Allan Torstenson, Bill Dermody, Jake Reilly, Mike Richardson, Kady Dadlez, and Sonja Butler, Department of Planning and Economic Development staff.

I. Swearing in new commissioner Jeffrey Risberg.

New Planning Commission member Jeffrey Risberg was sworn in by Trudy Maloney, City Council Director.

II. Chairs Announcements

Chair Reveal announced that the next Planning Commission meeting scheduled for Friday, November 17, 2017 has been cancelled.

Chair Reveal will also be asking a few commissioners to be members of the Nominating Committee for next year. The nominations will be announced at the first meeting of the year, with officers elected at the annual meeting the second meeting of January. Typically officers continue once they are in their position, but it does not have to be that way. The commission will have two officer vacancies starting next year, which are the first and second vice chair positions. Any commissioner who is interested should let Donna Drummond or Chair Reveal know.

III. Planning Directors Announcements

Donna Drummond, Planning Director announced that the package of zoning code amendments and licensing code changes for short term rentals was approved by the City Council. The only changes the City Council made from what the Planning Commission recommended was to allow triplexes and 4-plexes to have all short term rental units as long as the owner was in residence in the building. The City Council also changed the licensing fee which had been proposed at $7,500.00 for platforms like Air BnB and for individuals it at $75. The fee for individual hosts
was reduced to $40 and the fee for platforms was increased to $10,000.00. Minneapolis has recently approved some short term rental requirements too.

Ms. Drummond also discussed the current status of the existing Pedro Park and adjacent Public Safety Annex (PSA) building. The Fitzgerald Park Precinct Plan had proposed demolishing the PSA building and adding that area to the existing Pedro Park. There is discussion now about whether or not the park should be as big as was envisioned in the plan. The Mayor has proposed that the PSA Building be renovated for office space and for high tech companies that like that type of retro space.

Finally, Ms. Drummond introduced the new Zoning Administrator for the Department of Safety and Inspection (DSI). Wendy Lane, the City’s long time zoning administrator, has retired and Yaya Diatta, here in the audience, is the new Zoning Administrator. He has worked for DSI for 15 years.

IV. PUBLIC HEARING: Sustainable Power (Wind and Solar) Zoning Code Amendments – Item from the Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee. (Jake Reilly, 651/266-6618)

Chair Reveall announced that the Saint Paul Planning Commission was holding a public hearing on the Sustainable Power (Wind and Solar) Zoning Code Amendments. Notice of the public hearing was published in the Legal Ledger on October 26, 2017, and was sent to the citywide Early Notification System list and other interested parties.

Jake Reilly, PED staff, gave a Power Point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission

As of today’s date only two letters have been received: one from Benita Warns and one from Lorraine Delehanty, both concerned citizens of Saint Paul.

Chair Reveall read the rules of procedure for the public hearing.

The following person spoke:

Ms. Mary Matze, Landform Professional Services, 105 5th Avenue South, Minneapolis. Ms. Matze represents a landscape architecture, engineering and planning firm that provides professional services for many developers in the community. Over the last three or four years they have been doing a lot of work in the solar industry. Landform has been working with large-scale national developers and local developers, including those developers who have worked on the airport solar installation. This industry is growing - it’s becoming more efficient not only in the United States but on a global scale. Ms. Matze is requesting that the city revisit the idea of looking at solar as a principal use in the city. There are opportunities in the city to look at sites where solar might be appropriate as a principal use. Those sites are typically sites that are not yet ready for development. Some of these opportunities might be sites that have been used for utilities in the past or sites that may be in undesirable locations for residential, industrial or commercial development. She noted that the City of Saint Paul has made efforts to power municipal buildings with solar energy sources, and to be able to say to your residents. ‘we’re powering our own buildings by energy that’s produced in the city and also sending such energy to the grid’ may be a more politically acceptable argument for alternative energy use than saying,
'we are getting this energy - buying a credit - but it is coming from somewhere else in Minnesota.' She concluded by calling this an opportunity to create a holistic, full-circle energy system for the City of Saint Paul and asking that the City revisit studying solar as a principal use. Ms. Matze offered her services to work with staff to think about different considerations that have been raised by their clients.

**MOTION:** Commissioner Thao moved to close the public hearing, leave the record open for written testimony until 4:30 p.m. on Monday, November 6, 2017 and to refer the matter back to the Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee for review and recommendation. The motion carried unanimously on a voice vote.

V. **Zoning Committee**

**STAFF SITE PLAN REVIEW** – List of current applications. *(Tia Anderson, 651/266-9086)*

**NO BUSINESS**

Commissioner Edgerton announced that the next Zoning Committee meeting scheduled for Thursday, November 9, 2017 has been cancelled. Commissioner Edgerton also noted that the Listening House has appealed the Planning Commission's decision, so now it will go to City Council for them to make a decision on. Donna Drummond added that there were two appeals files, one from Listening House and the other from the neighbors.

VI. **Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee**

**2040 Comprehensive Plan Update:** Parks Chapter – Overview and Key Themes. *(Mike Richardson, 651-266-6621)*

Mike Richardson gave a Power Point presentation which can be seen on the web page at: [http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission](http://www.stpaul.gov/planningcommission).

Commissioner Lindeke asked if the Parks Chapter says anything about parking and transportation issues.

Mr. Richardson said that it addresses them in terms of access. Mr. Dernody is chapter lead for the Transportation Chapter and is on the Parks Chapter working group. This was intended to keep those lines of communication open to make sure that there is not something in the Parks Plan that conflicts with the Transportation Plan or vice-versa. For example, there was discussion about a policy regarding the potential for ride sharing and other transportation options near parks. There are access issues to be addressed in both chapters.

Chair Reveal asked if Commissioner Lindeke has had a chance to have a discussion with the Transportation Committee.

Commissioner Lindeke does not recall parks issue coming up in particular. However, he identified Como as a regional park and suggested including a goal in the plan about the transportation vision or something like that. He noted the connections between parks, budget, and land use.
Commissioner DeJoy asked how decisions are made regarding when to put in a restroom facility from a policy standpoint, because it doesn’t seem equitable across the city.

Mr. Richardson replied that was one of the comments that they received from the Parks Commission and that the presence or quality of restrooms differentiate parks from one another and has very real use implications. This issue will be addressed during the next chapter revision cycle.

Commissioner Lee stated that she did not see anything about security and safety and asked about the plan for that. She also asked what tools were used to measure or determine equitable allocation of programs and resources?

Mr. Richardson said for security and safety they have a policy that requires considering public safety in the process of designing and maintaining parks as an important part of those decisions. In the existing plan there are approximately half a dozen policies that all talk about different aspects of public safety, and those have been consolidated into a more broad statement that is going to allow for funding to be accessed and to allow for future safety and security ordinances and policies to be put into place. Regarding equity, Mr. Richardson said that it has been an ongoing conversation and the most consistent comment from everyone consulted over the last four to six weeks. There is a need to clarify what we are talking about when we talk about equity, not just as an overall goal of the Comp Plan, but also from the point of view of particular chapters. For example, how is equity operationalized in Parks? One of the tools the Comp Plan team is looking at is the ACP 50 boundary. It identifies areas of the city that are at least 50% people of color and where at least 40% of people have incomes that are less than 185% of the federal poverty threshold. This line is an ever-changing line.

Chair Reveal added that equity is a major theme across the whole plan and it is not just the Parks Chapter.

Commissioner Baker added that they should think specifically more about the equitable allocation of resources, and asked staff to consider the feedback loop. For example, once the City identifies an inequity, how is that information brought back to determine future allocations of that process and plan. He said that once you have that information and are tracking it, it can then inform future allocation decisions.

Commissioner Edgerton said that there have been several questions about policies and specifics and suggested that if there is an interest, he encouraged commissioners to review the Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee packets online to find the whole list of the 38 policies. It was reviewed at the committee level, but not at the full Planning Commission. He suggested reviewing the list of policies online and forwarding any comments and questions along to Mr. Richardson.

Commissioner Thao announced the item on the agenda for the next Joint Comprehensive and Neighborhood Planning Committee meeting on Tuesday, November 14, 2017.

VII. **Transportation Committee**

Commissioner Lindeke announced that their last meeting was canceled, but they are meeting on
Monday, November 6, 2017.

VIII. Communications Committee

No report.

IX. Task Force/Liaison Reports

No reports.

X. Old Business

None.

XI. New Business

None.

XII. Adjournment

Meeting adjourned at 9:25 a.m.

Recorded and prepared by
Sonja Butler, Planning Commission Secretary
Planning and Economic Development Department,
City of Saint Paul

Respectfully submitted,

Donna Drummond
Planning Director

Approved December 1, 2017

(CDate)

Cedrick Baker
Secretary of the Planning Commission